

LOCAL GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday, 21st January 2025 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Tom Munro in the Chair

Councillors Tom Kirkham, Will Fletcher and Jeanne Raspin.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Natalie Etches (Head of Business Growth, Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Limited), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, were Councillors John Ritchie, Portfolio Holder for Growth, and Phil Smith, Junior Portfolio Holder for Growth.

LOC32-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apology for absence was received.

LOC33-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

LOC34-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

LOC35-24/25 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor Will Fletcher

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Local Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 5th November 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

LOC36-24/25 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS

Members considered the List of Key Decisions.

Questions raised on items included:

- The Feasibility Study for Green Skills Hub – the study was for the outfit and equipment (the Portfolio Holder for Growth stated a full report would be brought before the Council, with the Monitoring Officer adding a report would be brought before the next Executive);

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- The Roseland Park and Crematorium – the item had been made exempt due to the sensitive nature of costs associated with the developer.

Moved by Councillor Will Fletcher and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in the private document be noted.

LOC37-24/25 BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGY - MONITORING UPDATE (VERBAL)

The Head of Business Growth provided a verbal update on the Council's Business Growth Strategy (the 'Strategy').

The Strategy was being drafted and would cover 2025-29. The Business Growth team had been working with different departments across the Council (two workshops had been held with the Housing, Planning and Leisure teams).

Consultation with the Devolution team had also taken place.

It was envisaged the Strategy would be similar to the current plan, though additionally capture 5 main themes to align with the East Midlands County Combined Authority's 5 broad priority areas (Land & Housing; Net Zero & Environment; Business Growth & Innovation; Skills and Adult Education; and Public Health).

A further meeting had taken place in the previous week and a report would be provided to the Committee's next meeting.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

LOC38-24/25 PLEASLEY VALE REGENERATION PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The Head of Business Growth presented the report to the Committee.

The report highlighted work that had taken place over the last 2 months, though it was noted for 3 weeks work had halted for the Winter Holiday and New Year break.

Following a procurement exercise by the Loss Adjuster's appointed contractor, Monaghans had recommended Dragonfly Development Limited (DDL) be appointed as the preferred supplier. DDL had submitted the most cost-effective quote of the three submitted and were identified as the most compliant tender with the lowest risk.

The Executive had approved the appointment of DDL at a December 2024 meeting.

The Executive had also approved the appointment of P&D Environmental to complete flood remedial works at Pleasley Vale Business Park. This appointment was based upon the scope of works presented at a previous Committee meeting.

Works could commence early 2025 on both the remediation work following Storm Babet and mitigation efforts against future flood events.

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The Council had approved funds for investment into Pleasley Vale for the schemes identified in the report, as well as additional repairs and works to the mill buildings.

The Council had further approved a recommendation for Members to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to establish the post and budget of a Building Surveyor / Contractors Administrator to manage and oversee building works and repairs. This would be advertised in the week after the Committee.

The Chair informed the Committee that at a recent internal meeting at The Arc, several Officers in attendance had to leave early due to flood alerts of the site. It was stated Members were aware of the problems, and it was good Officers were ready to act fast. A Member agreed, adding flood remediation works should now proceed.

The Head of Business Growth informed a full scope of works should be completed in 4-6 months.

It was also noted a Mansfield District Councillor had been coordinating work between the Council and Pleasley Vale and village.

The main concern remained the sluice gates in Pleasley village, but once the added risk of the wet, winter months had subsided, work should progress quickly.

A Member and the Head of Business Growth both informed the Committee that the same Mansfield District Councillor had also worked with the Environment Agency to carry out repairs to the sluice gates.

Moved by Councillor Tom Kirkham and seconded by Councillor Will Fletcher
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Approved by Councillor John Ritchie, Portfolio Holder for Growth

LOC39-24/25 DRAGONFLY SHAREHOLDER BOARD UPDATE (VERBAL)

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the Dragonfly Shareholder Board.

Members were informed future meetings of the Dragonfly Shareholder Board would be reconvened before the Committee met (the next Dragonfly Shareholder Board meeting would be taking place later that day).

No minutes could currently be provided due to the Dragonfly Shareholder Board meeting of the 6th November 2024 being adjourned and the minutes of the 27th November 2024 meeting were being approved later that day.

The Committee were informed the current Chair of the Dragonfly Shareholder Board had stepped down, and with the recent change in Council leadership, an update would be provided at the Committee's next meeting.

The Woburn and Pendean project at Blackwell remained on track.

For the Roseland Crematorium, architects had been reappointed.

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For the Briar Close project, demolition had taken place in 2024 and with the £15 million Regeneration Fund, the Chief Executive, the Head of Business Growth and the MP for Bolsover were coordinating efforts to ensure the Council speedily received the Memo of Understanding from the Secretary of State.

The Executive had received the Quarter 2 2024/25 Delivery Update on Dragonfly Development Ltd. (DDL) (this was publicly available). The Quarter 3 2024/25 Delivery Update would be provided to the Dragonfly Shareholder Board meeting later that day.

It was noted there had been some delay by the auditors of DDL, but this would be discussed by the Audit Committee that week.

The Chief Executive listed the reviews currently taking place, including on Local Partnerships and what happened to local authority owned businesses and properties when councils moved towards a unitary body (the latter a response to the UK National Government's English Devolution White Paper).

A Member stated it was important for the Committee to scrutinise the minutes of the Dragonfly Shareholder Board and review the DDL Delivery Updates. The Chief Executive agreed; the minutes and Delivery Updates would be circulated with the Committee after the meeting.

It was reiterated Dragonfly Shareholder Board meetings would be scheduled before the Committee met in future.

To questions on who the next Chair of the Dragonfly Shareholder Board would be and which body would select them, the Chief Executive stated this would be discussed at the next Dragonfly Shareholder Board meeting and that the next Leader of the Council would provide their thoughts before any decision was made. An update on this would be provided after the Council meeting next week.

To a question on the financial arrangements of the Roseland Crematorium, the Head of Business Growth stated an update would be available in the next cycle of meetings. To a question on how this would align with the Council's budget setting, the Chief Executive stated the Section 151 Officer would be consulted.

To a question on the financial arrangement delays, the Scrutiny Officer offered it might have been difficult to finalise due to the current limited resources within the Council's Finance team.

The Chief Executive added the legal requirements of public sector accounts were different to that of private sector accounts; some delays had been caused by DDL's own accountants who had been unaware of the Council's more stringent practices.

Due to disturbances in the public gallery, the meeting was adjourned at 10:34 hours. The meeting was reconvened at 10:44 hours, with the decision taken to suspend the rest of the formal meeting.

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LOC40-24/25 REVIEW OF INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL VALUE TO BDC POLICY AND DELIVERY - POST-SCRUTINY MONITORING (FINAL REPORT)

The item was deferred to the following meeting.

LOC41-24/25 WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

The item was not discussed.

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 10:45 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work.